

# The Frog Prince

Once upon a time, a very long time ago, there lived a King whose daughters were all beautiful. The youngest, who was not yet married, was the most beautiful of all. She liked to sit by the well in her garden, and play there with her favourite toy, a golden ball.

One day, the little princess was playing with her ball when it rolled out of her hands and straight into the water. She looked into the well, but it was so deep that her ball could not be seen. She began to cry.

Suddenly she heard a little voice ask, "What's the matter, little princess? Why are you crying?" Startled, she looked round and saw a frog poking its ugly head out of the water near her.

"Oh frog!" she said, "I am crying because I have lost my golden ball, and I can't get it back."

"No need to cry," answered the frog, "I'll get it for you. But I'll need something in exchange. What have you got?"

"What would you like, little frog?" the princess asked. "Would you like my clothes, my jewels, or my crown?"

The frog answered, "No thanks! But I'd to be your friend, and play with you, and sit with you to eat, and share your food and drink, and your bed. How about it?" "Well, OK then," said the princess. But she thought to herself, "What a silly frog! What silly things he says! He lives in the water with the other frogs, and he croaks! He can't possibly be my friend!"

Meanwhile the frog dived into the water, and quickly swam up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. The King's daughter was delighted! She picked up her golden ball, and began to run away.

"Wait, wait!" cried the frog. "Don't forget me! I can't run as fast as you!"

But the little princess pretended not to hear him, and ran home, and soon forgot the poor frog.



The next day, just as the princess sat down to dinner, there was a knock on the door of the palace, and a voice cried out, "Princess, open the door for me!"

The princess ran to see who was outside, but when she opened the door, and saw the frog, she slammed the door shut in his face! She sat down to eat again, feeling very frightened, and the King asked, "My child, what are you so afraid of? Is there a giant outside who wants to steal you away?"

"No," she replied sadly. "It is not a giant. It is a disgusting frog!"

"A frog? What does a frog want with you?" asked the King.

Sadly, she told him the story. "Yesterday, as I was in the forest sitting by the well, playing, my golden ball fell into the water. And, because I cried so much, the frog brought it out again for me. In return for his favour, I promised him that he could be my friend, but I never thought he would be able to come out of the water! And he is outside, and wants to come in here."

Now the King was an honourable man, and believed in keeping promises. "If you made a promise to the frog, you must stick by it, even if it makes you unhappy" he told her. "Go and let in the frog, now!"

The King's daughter, ashamed, opened the door, and in hopped the frog. He followed her, hop by hop, to her chair, and sat looking at her. "Lift me up, please, so that I can sit beside you!" The princess hesitated until she saw the King's angry face, and then she lifted the frog up quickly!

The frog looked at her again. "Push your plate closer so that I can share your food!" She did, but she was very unhappy about it. While the frog ate, the princess felt more and more sick! Finally, he said, "I have eaten enough. But now I am tired and want to go to bed. It's time we both went to sleep."

The King's daughter began to cry, because she didn't want to sleep in the same bed as the ugly little frog. But the King grew angry again, and said, "This frog helped you when you were in trouble. You shouldn't look down on him now!" So she picked up the frog with two fingers, carried him upstairs, and put him under the sheets. Then she climbed into bed, as far away from him as she could be. It was a long time before she fell asleep.

When she awoke the next morning, she looked for the frog. But he was a frog no longer! He was a handsome young prince, with beautiful kind eyes. He told her how a wicked witch had put a spell on him, so that he would stay a frog forever unless he could share a bed with a beautiful princess. The King's daughter had saved him, and now they would be married, and travel to his kingdom, and live happily ever after.